

The Ultimate Brownie Refrigerator Cake: A Decadent No-Bake Layered Dream

The Ultimate Brownie Refrigerator Cake: The Make-Ahead Dessert of Your Dreams



OVEN
325°F

TIME
2 min

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INGREDIENTS

Brownie Base: 1 box of your favorite brownie mix (plus the oil, eggs, and water required on the box).

Cream Cheese Layer: 1 package (8 oz) cream cheese, softened to room temperature; 1 cup powdered sugar; 4 oz (half of an 8 oz tub) whipped topping (like Cool Whip).

Pudding Layer: 2 boxes (3.9 oz each) chocolate instant pudding mix; 3 cups cold whole milk.

Topping: The remaining 4 oz of whipped topping; chocolate shavings or curls for garnish.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Bake the Foundation:** Preheat your oven according to the brownie mix instructions (usually 325°F or 350°F). Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Prepare the brownie batter and bake it until a toothpick comes out with just a few moist crumbs. **Crucial Step:** You must let the brownies cool completely before adding the next layer, otherwise, your cream cheese will melt.
- 2. Whip Up the Creamy Layer:** In a medium bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until it is light and fluffy. Sift in the powdered sugar and beat again. Gently fold in half of the whipped topping. Spread this white, velvety mixture over the cooled brownies.
- 3. Mix the Pudding:** In a separate bowl, whisk together the two boxes of chocolate pudding mix and the 3 cups of cold milk. Whisk for about 2 minutes until it starts to thicken. Carefully pour this over the cream cheese layer and smooth it out with a spatula.
- 4. The Final Flourish:** Spread the remaining whipped topping over the pudding layer. I like to use a spoon to create little "peaks" and "valleys" for texture. Sprinkle your chocolate shavings or curls over the top.
- 5. The Big Chill:** Cover the dish with plastic wrap. This is the hardest part: refrigerate for at least 4 hours. This time allows the pudding to set firmly and the brownie to soften slightly into the cream cheese, creating a seamless dessert.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Brownie: If you're feeling extra, you can use a homemade brownie recipe, but ensure it's a "fudgy" style rather than "cakey" so it stands up to the layers.

Pudding Flavors: While chocolate is classic, you can swap one of the chocolate boxes for vanilla or even cheesecake-flavored pudding for a different profile.

Cream Cheese: Make sure it is fully softened!

If it's cold, you'll end up with tiny lumps in your creamy white layer.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Clean Slices: For those perfect "magazine" squares, wipe your knife with a warm, damp cloth between every single cut.

Avoid the "Skin": If you hate the "skin" that forms on pudding, make sure your whipped topping layer completely covers the pudding layer to seal it from the air.

Don't Over-mix: When adding the whipped topping to the cream cheese, "fold" it in with a spatula rather than using the electric mixer to keep it airy.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

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